

JUNE 28, 1964

Those inscrutable agents-provoked

By Adolf A. Berle jr.

THE INVISIBLE GOVERNMENT. By David Wise and Thomas B. Ross. Random House. 375 pp. \$5.95.

The deadly drama called the Cold War, directed by the Soviet Union against many countries and with the United States as its ultimate target, began even before armistices ended World War II. As matters developed in that terrible and unfinished struggle, the Central Intelligence Agency in time became the chief American apparatus defending a number of foreign areas and, with them, the U. S. itself. During many years, Allen Dulles was its chief of staff. In general, his program was successful; sometimes, it suffered defeat.

This ought to have been (and is not) the first paragraph of this interesting book describing a number of major engagements in the struggle. Its material is fascinating. Its lack of historical context—it scarcely mentions the enemy operations—conveys an unfair impression; the book is selective journalism, not history.

The title is hardly fair; the C.I.A. is neither a "government" nor wholly "invisible." Most of its operations, indeed, are secret, but this is equally true of the Departments of State and Defense and of a number of other Federal agencies. Rightly the authors raise the unsolved problems of how much secrecy is legitimate in democratic government and how to maintain effective control over vast, necessarily secret, operations. But that problem is by no means limited to any one organization.

"The Invisible Government" of the title means the Central Intelligence Agency. Painstakingly, the au-

thors have collected much material already public and have added details from other sources. Its value lies in narratives constructed from previously scattered fragments. Since all the operations described involve classified information, no reviewer can check deeply for accuracy. Lacking full historical context, the negative case is as here presented more impressive than it would be if it were set against the background of international struggle with which this volume does not deal.

In fact, from 1947 on a virtual state of undeclared war has been maintained in a series of theaters and in varying degrees of intensity. The phrase "Cold War" obscures the fact that direct armed operations as well as subversion and revolutions were planned, organized, financed, directed, armed and frequently manned by the Soviet Union against other countries from bases on her own territory or territory under her control. Targets ran all the way from Laos to Cuba, from Vietnam to Venezuela. Accompanying propaganda made brutally clear that the ultimate "imperialist enemy" was the United States.

Responding, the wartime Office of Strategic Services (headed by General William Donovan), which had handled underground operations during World War II, was reorganized by the Truman Administration as the Central Intelligence Agency. To it was assigned the job not merely of collecting information but also of conducting active defense operations.

So far as I know, in every case these operations merely countered offensive actions initiated by the Soviet or Chinese side. This

Continued